

How Do Attachment Parenting and Baby Sleep Training Work Together?

Parents who practice or who want to practice attachment parenting often struggle with the concepts of how to sleep, train their baby and how to help their baby sleep through the night. One of the primary principles of attachment parenting promotes the belief that sleep training techniques, primarily, crying it out, can have adverse psychological and physiological effects on the child. With attachment parenting, co-sleeping is strongly encouraged to ensure that baby's needs are being met at night including helping to soothe them at night when they wake.

[The common misconception is that sleep training](#) only includes letting your baby cry it out as a way to learn to self soothe and put themselves to sleep. This is not true. There are other methods for getting your baby or toddler to sleep through the night and learning how to fall asleep on their own.

[The elements of attachment parenting](#) are designed to help baby and parent form strong and healthy attachments in part by tuning in to what babies need and responding appropriately. Helping your baby to learn how to sleep and have healthy sleep habits are part of tuning into what a baby needs. Helping your baby sleep through the night or helping your baby nap longer is being responsive to your baby's need for sleep. It is also important to keep in mind that not all babies are the same. The different temperaments of babies will play a role in how effective a sleep training method will work. For babies that have a more persistent or strong-willed temperament, a no-cry sleep solution can often be more effective.

[Parents who practice attachment parenting are very passionate about this style of parenting.](#) However, most people will agree that any type of parenting that promotes healthy and positive relationships is good for babies and families. Each family needs to find what works for them and for some families this involves sleep training their baby even as they practice attachment parenting. Sleep training can take into account a variety of parenting styles, including attachment parenting.

What is a mom to do when she is waking up many times a night with a breastfeeding, pacifier-demanding, or rocking-addicted baby? Sleep coaching can be essential to restoring a family balance.

[Sleep training does NOT](#) have to mean controlled crying or cry it out or any other variation of it. Attachment parenting parents potty train (baby led mostly), so why can't you sleep train? The obvious difference between potty training and sleep training is that potty training usually happens when the child is a toddler and sleep training may occur at a younger age. However, if you can potty train gently, you can sleep train gently, too. Once you understand the mechanics of sleep associations, then it is possible to create a sleep coaching plan that does not involve leaving the baby to cry it out.

It can be unrealistic though to expect that there will not be any crying while your baby is learning how to fall asleep on his own, but you never have to leave your baby alone. Babies cry to communicate a need and sometimes they are crying because they are frustrated at not being able to sleep or because they are not getting enough sleep. Some crying can actually help lead babies to better sleeping. Often babies need to gain the confidence to believe that they can fall asleep without your assistance.

This may mean that you have to give your child the room to learn healthy sleep habits without the crutches of breastfeeding, pacifying or rocking to sleep. It is okay to remain close to encourage support during the transition during the times your baby is crying during sleep training. A baby who is not yet self soothing himself to sleep does not necessarily mean that he cannot self soothe if given the opportunity to learn and practice this skill.

When mom and baby are suffering from sleep deprivation, then sleep training is always worth a try and you can always re-evaluate if your plan does not go well. There is hope that you can possibly make a difference in your and your baby's life by "sleep coaching" even when you are "attachment parenting."